

Análisis sociológico de la problemática agropecuaria en el municipio de Salvatierra, Guanajuato

Sociological analysis of the agricultural problems in the municipality of Salvatierra, Guanajuato

Análise sociológica de problemas agrícolas no município de Salvatierra, Guanajuato

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Resumen

Actualmente se carece de trabajos que exploren desde una perspectiva sociológica la problemática agropecuaria del municipio de Salvatierra. El objetivo de este trabajo fue realizar un análisis sociológico de la problemática agropecuaria de Salvatierra con base en la *teoría del actor social* a partir de una serie de entrevistas que se aplicaron a un conjunto de informantes clave de diez comunidades rurales y la cabecera municipal de Salvatierra, entre los que destacan productores agrícolas y ganaderos, un representante de una organización ganadera, dos representantes de partidos políticos, un representante del módulo de riego y dos investigadores de la Universidad de Guanajuato. El diseño metodológico que se aplicó fue de tipo cualitativo, el cual fue respaldado por la observación participante y la entrevista estructurada. Los resultados y las conclusiones indican que se ha perdido el interés por la actividad agrícola y ganadera, y la

forma de vida campesina que se tuvo en otras épocas, situación que podría limitar la implementación de proyectos de desarrollo rural: las personas prefieren trabajar en las fábricas de la región o emigrar a Estados Unidos; además, y aunque los productores agropecuarios entrevistados señalaron que las comunidades viven exclusivamente del campo, la mayoría vive de las remesas que envían sus parientes de Estados Unidos y de los apoyos económicos que reciben de programas gubernamentales como Prospera y 70 años y más.

Palabras clave: problemática agropecuaria, teoría del actor social, modernización agrícola, desarrollo rural.

Abstract

Currently there are no works that explore the agricultural problems of the municipality of Salvatierra from a sociological perspective. The objective of this study was to conduct a sociological analysis of the agricultural problems of Salvatierra based on the *actor-oriented perspective* from a series of interviews that were applied to a set of key informants in ten rural communities and the capital city of Salvatierra, among those who stand out: agricultural and livestock producers, a representative of a livestock producers organization, two representatives of political parties, a representative of an irrigation module and two researchers from the University of Guanajuato. The methodological design that was applied was qualitative, which was supported by participant observation and structured interview. The results and findings indicate that interest in agriculture and livestock production activities, and the old times life style has been lost, situation that could limit the implementation of rural development projects: people prefer to work in the factories of the region or to emigrate to United States; also, and although them producers agricultural interviewees noted that the communities live exclusively of the field, most people lives of the remittances that their relatives send from United States and of the support economic that receive from Government financial assistance programs such as *Prospera* and *70 años y más*.

Key words: agricultural problems, actor-oriented perspective, agricultural modernization, rural development.

Resumo

Actualmente, existe uma falta de trabalhos que exploram a partir de uma perspectiva sociológica problemas agrícolas do município de Salvatierra. O objetivo deste estudo foi realizar uma análise sociológica de problemas agrícolas de Salvatierra baseado na teoria de ator social a partir de uma série de entrevistas que foram aplicados a um conjunto de informantes-chave em dez comunidades rurais e da sede do município de Salvatierra, entre os quais os agricultores e pecuaristas, um representante de uma organização de gado, dois representantes de partidos políticos, um representante do módulo de irrigação e dois pesquisadores da Universidade de Guanajuato. O desenho metodológico foi aplicado foi qualitativa, que foi aprovado pela observação participante e entrevista estruturada. Os resultados e conclusões indicam que ele perdeu o interesse na agricultura e pecuária, e do modo de vida camponês que teve no passado, uma situação que poderia limitar a implementação de projectos de desenvolvimento rural: as pessoas preferem trabalhar em fábricas na região ou emigrar para os Estados Unidos; Além disso, embora os agricultores entrevistados disseram que as comunidades que vivem exclusivamente do campo, a maioria vive das remessas seus parentes nos Estados Unidos e com o apoio financeiro que recebem dos programas governamentais, como Prospera e 70 anos ou mais.

Palavras-chave: problemas agrícolas, teoria do ator social, modernização agrícola, o desenvolvimento rural.

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Introduction

To four years of the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto, there has been no substantial changes in the economic policy toward the most vulnerable social actors of the Mexican countryside, in other words, most of the peasant population, small agricultural producers, women, agricultural laborers and indigenous groups. On the contrary, the Government style of the "New PRI", has exacerbated ancestral problems such as poverty, electoral clientelism, political repression, despotism and violation of human rights. On the other hand, the poor increased by two million in

three years of the *peñista* Government and the National Crusade Against Hunger (Mexico) in 400 municipalities of the country has been a resounding failure. Also *Prospera* is a program that only manages poverty and does not combat its structural roots.

The longstanding and complex agricultural problematic to national level wasn't born yesterday, as the country has more than three decades with a neo-liberal economic model that jeopardized the survival and future of the economy and rural lifestyle. In that sense, the State of Guanajuato and the municipality of Salvatierra, are a reflection, to some extent, of the pernicious effects of an exclusive and anti-farmer agricultural development scheme. The scheme, is the product of a process of a hegemonic social construction that emphasizes the discourse of the profitability and competitiveness of the agricultural sector to the detriment of the rural economy and the rural poor. The objective of this study was to analyze sociologically the agricultural problems of Salvatierra based on the *actor-oriented perspective* starting from a series of interviews applied to a set of key informants of ten rural communities and of the capital city of Salvatierra.

This article is divided in five paragraphs. The first part, corresponding to the conceptual framework, exposes some key concepts such as agriculture, livestock production, agricultural issues, rural development, the theory of the social actor and some diagnostics on the agricultural problems nationally and in the State of Guanajuato. Then, the second paragraph, locates geographical and demographically the municipality of Salvatierra based on some development plans at State and municipal level, as well as agricultural issues from the official discourse of the Government actors. The third section, the methodology, sets out the context, purpose, the methodological approach and the research techniques used in the study. The fourth paragraph, presents the results of the guiding questions applied to ten key informants in ten rural communities and other social actors in the capital city of Salvatierra. Finally, the fifth paragraph of findings, exhibits a series of possible solutions to overcome the agricultural problems of the municipality of Salvatierra.

Theoretical-conceptual framework

In this section we will describe some basic concepts such as agriculture, livestock, agricultural problems, rural development, sociological imagination and social actor theory. Next, some elements of the agricultural problem are exposed at the national level and the State of Guanajuato.

According to some authors agriculture is defined as "tillage or cultivation of the earth, which aims to obtain the vegetables that are required to meet human needs. Agriculture is located in the primary sector of the economy. The main activities of agriculture are: a) preparation of the land; b) cleaning of the land; C) scrapping; D) sow; E) cultivation work; F) harvest; G) transport and h) storage " (Zorrilla & Méndez, 1994, p. 5).

Regarding livestock, some economists define it as: "an economic activity or branch of the agricultural sector that consists of raising cattle for sale or the exploitation of its derived products, such as meat, milk, skin. Some types of cattle are cattle and pigs, among others "(Méndez, 2012, p.83).

The agricultural problem, we can define it as the set of social, agrarian, cultural, technological, economic and ecological situations of agriculture and livestock, defined and / or conceptualized as undesired by a variety of social actors and partly considered as surmountable. The agricultural problem is the subject of research in agronomy, environmental sciences and social sciences that focus on the rural environment such as agricultural history, rural sociology, agricultural economics, agricultural geography, agroecology, regional development And rural development.

On the other hand, rural development, according to some experts at the Universidad Autonoma Chapingo, is defined as the "economic and social process that is carried out in traditional rural societies and that tends to improve the well-being of the rural population by means of Actions such as the introduction of modern technologies and the provision of social services (health, education, culture, drinking water, drainage, etc.) in order to increase income and raise the quality of life of the majority of the rural population " (Mata, 2009, 51). Likewise, rural development requires interdisciplinary and interinstitutional actions focused on a specific community and region, trying to influence the different aspects of the rural population, such as income, education, health, food and housing. In order to influence these aspects, the organization of the communities should be strengthened in such a way as to promote productive actions or projects, education programs, health care projects and housing improvement programs (Lozano, 2008). The definition of rural development depends on the geographical and cultural context of the social actors that define it, as well as on the political ideology of the social actor and / or

institution that conceptualizes and constructs it: country, company, political party, academy or social movement.

Now what is the sociological imagination? How to locate the agricultural problem in the context of the sociological imagination? According to Charles Wright Mills (2003), sociology should not be a cold science and unrelated to human experience. He thought that sociology should help people escape from their private prisons, from the cages in which they have been locked up, since sociology can show us that it is society - and not our personal mistakes - that is responsible for many of our problems. Sociology, according to Mills, transforms private problems into social and political problems, that is, apparently "personal" problems such as migration, labor exploitation of agricultural laborers, the "feminization" of the Mexican countryside, loss of food sovereignty, or the rejection of transgenic foods and megaprojects, for example, can not be understood if the interactions of thousands of biographies of small agricultural producers, day laborers and indigenous people with social structures of power are not analyzed. The sociological imagination allows its possessor to understand the broader historical setting in terms of its meaning for the inner life and for the external trajectory of a diversity of individuals. The first fruit of this imagination is the idea that the individual can only understand his own experience and evaluate his own destiny by locating himself in his time; That he can know his own possibilities in life if he knows those of all the individuals who are in his circumstances. The sociological imagination allows us to capture the history and the biography and the relation between both within the society. That is their task and promise (Wright, 2003).

The sociological imagination asks us above all to be able to think away from the familiar routines of our daily lives in order to see them as something new: the sociological imagination allows us all (not only sociologists) to understand the connections between our immediate social and personal scenarios and the remote and impersonal world that surrounds us and contributes to determining our identity (Giddens, 2002). However, the state sociological imagination (the analysis of the intersection between biography, history and national social structure) proposed by Mills is insufficient if social scientists ignore the powerful influences that globalization exerts on national societies, particularly in rural areas and in the living conditions of its social actors.

In this sense, the agricultural problems affecting a municipality, region or country reflect, to a certain extent, a series of macroeconomic policies established by the major multilateral organizations such as the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As an

example, free trade agreements and neoliberal structural reforms tend to favor large multinational corporations in developed countries, to the detriment of policies to support the peasant economy of Third World countries such as Mexico. This set of structural reforms has an economic and political impact on the cultural identity (peasant and indigenous) and on the living conditions of social actors, who react in an organized way and try to intervene in rural development processes. The background of this situation can be inscribed in the theory of the social actor, headed by Norman Long, which emerges as a reaction to the Marxian theory of rural analysis. Long locates his approach as an actor-oriented social constructionism, from which he seeks to account for everyday social practices, institutional structures, field resources, social networks, collective ideologies, sociopolitical arenas and beliefs that may be To the basis of the behavior of the actors regarding initiatives planned from abroad. (Pasquier, 2014). This theory rejects the general theories, the identification of the laws of development of capitalism, the essentialist interpretations and denies that the changes are dictated by supranational hegemonic powers. The central question that arises is, how the social world is constructed and organized and how social identities are constructed? Based on this vision, the social actor approach is proposed as a model in which the actors (workers, migrants, refugees, investors, traders, producers, etc.) construct their identity on an equal basis. Among the criticisms that have been made by the detractors of the TAS stand out: b) maintains that the actors are in equality of circumstances without there being a control or dominion by some of them; B) the TAS visualizes the individual actions, leaving aside the collective struggle of the social movements; Therefore, the TAS openly denies domination and exploitation, so it is placed among the theories that reinforce the status quo (Rubio, 2006).

Agricultural problems at the national level have received the attention of a multitude of articles, books and reports from academics in the areas of agronomy, social sciences and regional studies, as well as consultancies and agencies that dictate Mexico's agricultural policies as The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is not the purpose of this section to approach or transcribe these reports or studies, on the contrary, we tried to highlight some characterizations and aspects of the agricultural problem in the context of the neoliberal government of the New PRI, represented by Enrique Peña Nieto. In this sense, a prominent promoter of "poverty-focused rural development", has pointed out that at the dawn of the 21st century, the Mexican countryside is deteriorated and polluted in its environment; Caused by

various meteorological phenomena such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, and frost; With reduced government support; Unproductive in the field of grains, oilseeds and dairy; Extremely poor; And consequently, excluded from the process of national development (Mata, 2009).

As the government of Enrique Peña Nieto is known, it belongs to a line of neoliberal PRI and PAN governments that have embraced a series of policies and structural reforms that have accentuated migration, marginalization, poverty, rural feminization, ecocide and Cultural erosion of the Mexican countryside, particularly ejidos and communal lands, owned by small agricultural producers and indigenous peoples. In this context of just over three decades of neoliberalism, the Mexican countryside has transformed itself into a political-electoral reservoir for economic and political elites, and in the laboratory of the World Bank (WB) to implement and administer a series of social programs Such as Solidaridad, Progresas, Oportunidades and Prospera, which have failed to reduce the figure of just over 55 million poor people during the peñanietista government; Millions of poor people who, incidentally, have no place in the neoliberal model nor in its economic policies:

Policies that, to a great extent, after the Mexican Revolution have responded to the fundamental interest of supporting and underpinning urban-industrial growth to the detriment of agricultural and rural development. At present, the actions and programs for agriculture and the rural environment do not deviate much from the previous objectives; Rather, they tend to minimize and eliminate agricultural, livestock and forestry production that does not meet the conditions of efficiency, quality and profitability for its competition in the international market. Criteria such as productivity, profitability and competitiveness are now the parameters of neoliberal policy imposed on developing countries by the new phase of capitalist development, which is known as globalization. Today in Mexico all productive activity must be profitable; So that if it is not fulfilled, this activity is not useful to society and therefore, should not be supported or maintained (...) before it, in our country, the vast majority of peasants are condemned to disappear or Reconversion to the advance of globalized relations (Mata, 2009, p. 22).

The social and political construction on the problems affecting the Mexican countryside in the second decade of the twenty-first century disagrees ideologically among a variety of social actors immersed in this problem, since it is impossible to define and conceptualize in a consensual way if the agricultural sector is in " Crisis, "if it" regresses "or" progresses "from such contrasting

perspectives as the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA), the Greenpeace environmental organization, the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) National Agricultural Council (CNA), Chapingo Autonomous University (UACH), National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) or corn flour company Maseca.

For example, some scholars argue that the agricultural policy applied in Mexico in recent years has been a failure, because for neoliberal governments the countryside and peasants ceased to be a priority, which has prevented the sector from emerging from the crisis that Afflicted for years. The Mexican countryside represents historically one of the main problems of the country, a red focus of the Mexican economy that needs to be resolved adequately, otherwise it will aggravate the problems of the economy as a whole and of society in general. For these scholars, the problems that affect agriculture and livestock in Mexico are broken down into the following headings (Méndez, 2012):

Farming

- a) Deficit in the production of some crops such as maize, beans, rice, wheat and oilseeds, which has generated uninterrupted imports since 1972.
- b) Much of agriculture (especially food such as maize and beans) is carried out on temporary lands, so production and productivity depend on weather conditions.
- c) In the best lands (those located in irrigation districts) most of the production goes to export crops, such as fruit and vegetables, which causes the internal market to be neglected and food imported.
- d) The commercialization of agricultural products goes through an excessive intermediation process; This encourages prices to rise without direct producers benefiting from this increase.
- e) As the standard of living of the peasants deteriorates, it causes nutritional, educational and health deficiencies.
- f) There is an increasing degree of monopolization and control of agricultural activities by transnational corporations.

- g) Overall fall in production of 17 crops accounting for 80% of total production. Many crops such as maize have low yields, so their production continues to fall and the land is dedicated to the production of drugs.

Cattle raising

- a) The technology that is used in the cattle ranch is very backward, which prevents to practice it of intensive way, that leads to the stagnation of the production. The previous problem is due to the lack of investments for the development of this activity.
- b) Most of the cattle production is dedicated to the export and neglects the domestic market, which motivates the importation of meat and milk powder to satisfy internal needs.
- c) Due to the free trade agreements that Mexico has signed with numerous countries, there is a free importation of livestock products such as chicken, egg and viscera, which tends to increase, benefiting transnational corporations engaged in the commercialization of these products.

In another vein, the governor of Guanajuato, Miguel Marquez Márquez, asserted in an interview that the state has become one of the safest in the country, and that is a factor of competitiveness; Its consolidation comes from a project of uninterrupted PAN governments with a medium- and long-term vision that is giving results, which has translated into certainty and guarantee for investors (Baeza, 2012). In this sense, the governor's speech on agricultural activity is triumphalist, since Guanajuato has become the main producer of broccoli at the national level and occupies the first places in lettuce, wheat, corn, barley, strawberry, pork, sheep and Goats. It also ranked 8th in the value of agricultural production and 5th in the value of livestock production in 2011. In 2011 it recorded a volume of agricultural production of more than 8 million tons and of livestock production Of 465 thousand 739 tonnes.

The Governor's 2012-2018 Governance Program (2013) in rural development aims to: a) promote and implement productive and financing programs for agricultural development in rural communities; B) to promote the production of food, raw materials and agroindustrial products, and c) to promote, promote, promote and implement training and technological development for small and medium-sized farmers in the state.

However, many municipalities in the center and south of the state still carry a complex problem in terms of agricultural and rural development. For in the era of the Panamanian governments, a

type of water-intensive and highly polluting business agriculture has been favored. State and municipal governments have scorned peasant agriculture to favor a national and transnational agricultural and agroindustrial elite. Although Guanajuato and some of its municipalities have excelled in agricultural matters at the national level, their costs in social, environmental and economic terms have been very high for poor peasants, their natural resources and their cultural traditions.

In addition, with the rise of industrial corridors, the arrival of automotive companies and the expansion of the urban sprawl in Silao, Leon, Irapuato and Celaya, real estate developments have proliferated, which have made agricultural dispossession a latent threat to the economy and The rural way of life of ejidos and rural communities bordering these municipalities, a situation that benefited the "Bibriesca Brothers" in the municipality of Celaya during the government of Vicente Fox Quezada (2001-2006).

The Pan-American political project in the State of Guanajuato has privileged for more than twenty years a development model centered on large real estate entrepreneurs and agroexportadores, to the detriment of the peasant economy, a marginalized sector condemned to emigrate to large industrial cities and Neighboring northern country. The "triumphalist discourses" of PAN state and municipal governments, as well as their development plans, are far removed from the problems faced by the poor of the Guanajuato countryside: ejidatarios, smallholder smallholders, comuneros, indigenous groups, landless peasants , Agricultural laborers, seasonal migrants, retired women, abandoned women and exejidatarios.

On the other hand, the federal and state rural, agricultural and livestock development programs implemented in Guanajuato for some years, such as the Alliance for the Countryside, for example, have emphasized the mantra of agricultural modernization, business culture, Economic profitability and competitiveness, promoting in fact the marginalization and exclusion of large sectors of the rural population, a situation that has been reflected in a series of unflattering assessments:

The low commercial integration of producers in their markets, the high state migration flows and the low presence of producer organizations are some of the main problems facing the rural sector in Guanajuato. The dynamics of the environment require producers to be competitive in their production, processing and marketing processes. The level of competitiveness depends on the availability and quality of its natural resources, human resources, state policies and organization, organization of producers and agrifood chains, response and adaptation to external conditions and changes, infrastructure, position, Information and market intelligence and the flow, access, generation and adoption of technology. Given these factors, the different types of rural producers have a series of needs and deficiencies that, taken together, come from an important diversity of origins. These include the imperative need to develop local capacities to manage and support projects with regional feasibility, capitalization and acquisition of infrastructure for the promotion of efficiency and production with quality in the Rural Production Units and the organizational development that allows access to better services, inputs and markets, affordability characteristics supported by the Rural Development Program (SAGARPA-Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 2006, p. 85).

The agricultural problem in the municipality of Salvatierra

The municipality of Salvatierra is located to the south of the State of Guanajuato, it comprises 1.9% of its territory, belongs to Region IV South and Subregion 9 within the regional integration established in the Regulation of the Law of Planning for the State of Guanajuato. It borders to the north with Jaral del Progreso, Cortázar and Tarimoro; To the east with Tarimoro and Acámbaro; To the south with Acámbaro and the State of Michoacán de Ocampo; To the west with the State of Michoacán de Ocampo, Yuriria, Santiago Maravatío and Jaral del Progreso (IPLANEG, 2012). The municipality counts on a total of 82 localities, of which 6 have a population superior to 2,500 inhabitants reason why they are considered urban; The municipal head Salvatierra has 37,203 inhabitants. According to the General Population and Housing 2010 Census of INEGI, the population settled in the municipality of Salvatierra is 97,054 inhabitants, which represents 1.8% of the state population. The use of agricultural land is 70% of the municipal area, pasture area is 4.9%, urban area 3.6%, forest area 20% and forest 1.2% (IPLANEG, 2012).

It should be noted that Salvatierra has been the subject of a series of studies, diagnoses and "SWOT Analysis" of state agencies and local political actors such as the State Planning Institute

of Guanajuato (IPLANEG) and the political parties that have governed the municipality. IPLANEG, for example, conducted a SWOT analysis in 2012 that resulted in the following list of threats to the agricultural sector: low economic inputs, migration; Among the main problems presented by producers are: to face a lack of organization, low training, little incorporation of new technologies, problems of water supply, lack of access to credit, instability in the price of products, limitations in the Marketing problems, problems with climate issues, overexploited aquifers and lack of a culture of care and efficient use of water, which in turn has revealed other types of problems such as unemployment, low wages and poor visualization of the field as an alternative To improve the living conditions of young people and the adult population which generates emigration (IPLANEG, 2012).

For its part, the Panamanian municipal administration that governed Salvatierra in the period 2012-2015, indicates that the geographical location of the municipality, as well as climate, altitude and latitude create the environment conducive to agricultural production, becoming one of the Strongest regions in this line in the state. That is, much of the economy of the municipality revolves around this sector. It should be noted that in the agricultural sector is changing the production of traditional to protected agriculture and the use of conservation mode of farming which is two new areas of opportunity. Also, 32 different crop varieties are harvested in the municipality, which is possible due to the richness of the land in the region of the Vajeño valleys. Regarding livestock production, although it is not the one of greater strength, if there is poultry production, pork and goat. Although a great effort has been devoted to agricultural modernization, there is still a strong sector of producers with a traditional profile, with resistance to change, due to a lack of training, organization and entrepreneurial culture to join the new technologies, as well as Strategies to improve their marketing and financing schemes (Programa de Gobierno Administración 2012-2015, 2012):

- a) Small agricultural producers in the region have low levels of production, resulting in a low competitiveness of primary activities due to the scarce sources of financing granted by financial institutions to the agricultural sector, which is why non-producers Have sufficient capital to invest in the modernization and equipment of their production units.
- b) As productivity continues to decline, there will be low levels of profitability, which will result in lower incomes for producers who will unfortunately find themselves in need of renting, or perhaps selling their land.

- c) Regarding the commercialization of agricultural products, it is the intermediaries and not the producers who obtain the best income from production. This phenomenon occurs due to the lack of knowledge of how to enter the markets and sell directly to retailers and supermarkets their production. Being sufficiently prepared would ensure the marketing of your products at a better price.
- d) There is a low implementation of safety and quality in the production processes in the small production units of the agricultural and livestock sector, as a result of the lack of knowledge in the application of good practices and in some cases the lack of interest in modifying the way of producing even when This would generate added value to products and by-products.

On the other hand, the current PRI administration has not elaborated the "Municipal Development Plan 2015-2018" which contains the policies, objectives and strategies that promote rural development of the little more than one year in office. 80 localities rural, because the web page of the municipality hardly enunciates four axes of government: axis 1, Safe Salvatierra; Axis 2, attraction of investments and generation of jobs; Axis 3, combating poverty, and axis 4, quality of life. Axis 2, for example, aims to: "Encourage the creation of agribusiness, credit management, simplification of administrative procedures, monitoring environmental sustainability", however, does not indicate how or when will land that objective in actions To benefit agricultural producers.

Methodology

The purpose of this work, which began in August 2013 and concluded in October 2014, was to analyze sociologically the way in which a number of social actors conceive the various aspects of the agricultural and livestock problem. In this sense, key informants were interviewed from a sample of ten rural communities (mainly agricultural and livestock producers), as well as representatives of a livestock organization, an irrigation module, two political parties and two university professors from the University of Guanajuato Of the headquarters Salvatierra.

Qualitative methodology refers in its broadest sense to "research that produces descriptive data: people's own words, spoken or written, and observable behavior" (Taylor & Bogdan, 2010, p.20). Qualitative methodology is characterized by a holistic perspective; "Be understanding of the frame of reference of people; Focus on what is meaningful and relevant to the participants; Apply

to studies in the micro, as it delves deeper into the situation; Consider all scenarios and people as worthy of study; And be of a humanist nature "(Balcázar et al., 2010, page 22). Some qualitative methods used by the social sciences to gather information from subjects and study scenarios are participant observation, focus groups, content and discourse analysis, case study, life history and interview (structured, Semi-structured, group and in depth.). It should be noted that in this work structured interview and participant observation were used.

The structured interview is defined as the one in which, by default, the questions that are to be put through a form are set out to the interviewees, who are asked the same questions. The structured interview is applied to key informants and consists of identifying only the individuals who by their characteristics and social role can provide valuable information, which limits their sample and representativeness (Ortiz, 2007).

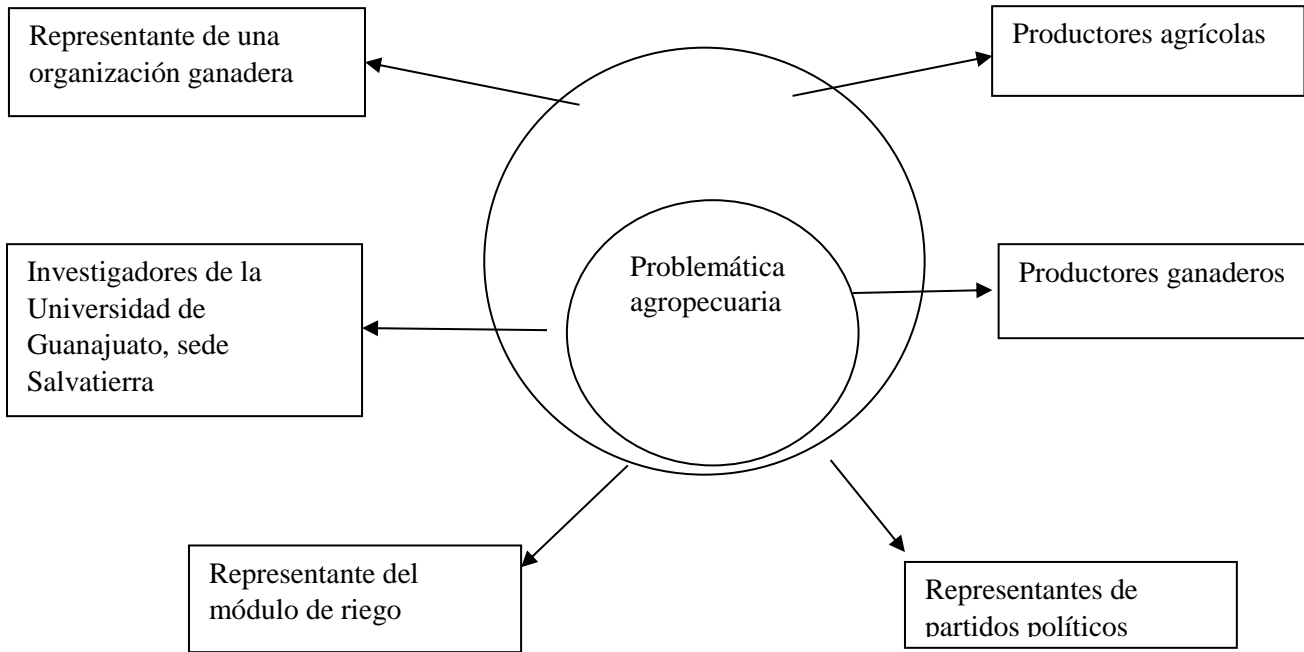
Participant observation refers to research that involves social interaction between the investigator and the informants, and during which data are collected in a systematic and non-intrusive way (Taylor & Bogdan, 2010).

The interviews with key informants were made in the communities of La Estancia del Carmen, Urireo, Maravatío del Encinal, La Virgen, Janicho, San Miguel Emenguero, Manríquez, Las Presitas, San Felipe de Jesús and La Huerta, as well as key informants Of the municipal head as a representative of a cattle organization, a representative of the irrigation module, two representatives of political parties and two researchers from the University of Guanajuato. The communities were chosen because they dominate agriculture and livestock as the main economic activities. In each of the ten communities, ten interviews were conducted with key informants, who at the outset of the research included theoretically the delegate, the ejido commissary, the primary school teacher, three farmers, and three farmers; However, and due to a number of circumstances, the interviews were only conducted to five agricultural producers and five livestock producers (see Figure 1).

It should be noted that during the field work there were several difficulties such as mistrust, as some women came to ask if they would be given any financial support; However, explaining the reasons for the interviews showed disinterest and said that "they knew nothing of agriculture and much less of raising cattle" and the same situation was repeated with the young people. On the other hand, the sociological examination of agricultural problems was particularly focused on the

analysis of the answers to the questions: a) What kind of problems does agriculture present? And b) What kind of problems does livestock have?

Figure 1. Social actors who participated in the interview on the agricultural problem.



Source: elaboración propia.

The following is a general guide to questions that form the structured interview conducted in the study communities: 1) How does agriculture define ?, 2) How do you define livestock? 3) What type of problems does the Community agriculture ?, 4) What kind of problems do the livestock in the community present ?, 5) Is agriculture a business? Yes () No () Why ?, 6) Is livestock business? Yes () No () Why, 7) How do droughts, floods and hurricanes affect agricultural and livestock activity in the community? 8) What are some of the effects of the crisis in the agricultural sector? 9) Are there public policies or programs on the part of the municipal, state and federal governments to solve the agricultural problems of the community? Yes? () Do not? () Why ?, 10) What public policy measures would you propose to the municipal government of Salvatierra to solve the agricultural and livestock crisis ?, 11) Does agriculture and livestock have a future? Yes? () Do not? () Why?

Results

The results of the interviews that were applied to the key informants of the ten study communities and the municipal head of Salvatierra are listed below.

a) Key informants from the ten communities: agricultural and livestock producers

During the application of the interviews it was found that the majority are small farmers and small farmers, "they do not have plots therefore rent or half sow". Those engaged in agricultural activity are mostly men whose ages range from 30 to 70 years; "Young people and women do not practice agriculture or livestock; Most young people migrate. " In some communities both men and women practice agriculture: they said that "it is the only way they have to have food all year round like corn." The farmers interviewed expressed that "agriculture is the only thing they know how to do and they also like"; Others practice it because the plot they have "is inherited from their parents and they have only to plant" or many of them who are already of age rent it; Others said that even if they do not make a profit, they get enough to feed their family.

The majority of the producers "takes between 10 and 40 years dedicating themselves to the agricultural production". However, "they do not have any municipal support, political party or any other means to cultivate their plots", but for the case of livestock if they have received support for fattening cattle by the municipal presidency and SAGARPA. The most common crops sown are "maize, beans, chickpeas, sorghum and some vegetables such as onions," the growers commented that "the cycles in which they are sown have been changed by irregular rains," the pests Are increasingly frequent, such as the "cuckoo" that has several years that has not been able to fight and the one that was very strong in 2013 of the worm.

Some of the interviewees practice irrigation by gravity and the other half sows in temporary; There is also the problem that "half of the irrigation crops do not have enough water, besides being contaminated". Farmers said that "it is very difficult to sow because irrigation, inputs and machinery cost a lot", and if they rent the plot or sow it half-way, it is not convenient; Very little they get from one hectare of maize: between 7 and 8 tons, and 9 and 10 tons of sorghum.

On the other hand, the problem of commercialization also affects the producers, because "when they try to sell their product they do not have where to sell it, only in the warehouses of

Salvatierra that pay very cheap." Most of the interviewees pointed out that agriculture and livestock are not business because they only do it to obtain food or for pleasure.

b) Researchers at the University of Guanajuato, Salvatierra

For the two researchers from the University of Guanajuato who were interviewed (one from the Department of Social Studies and the other from the Department of Agroindustrial Engineering) the strongest problems presented by agriculture are the "lack of organization by producers and the lack of training ". "Agriculture is still a random social activity, difficult to predetermine due to uncertain natural factors such as rain, frost, water, temperature, factors that are not controlled; Even the market, know how the products will be. Basically it is the problem of the whole country and perhaps the world, which is the lack of marketing strategies: marketing becomes the Achilles heel. "

Livestock has been lost; However, what little is known, "in the case of milk production, is the low profitability, we are faced with a very difficult market scenario where the producers are limited by the trading companies; For example, in Salvatierra, some producers in the medium and large scale produce for a company called Nestlé and in Celaya the company Coronado, logically is their only market and are subject to the prices of this company or other small cheese producers who Have a small market. "

Agriculture to be a business depends on many factors: "if it is a business but at a certain scale, that is, producers will have to have an area of 10 hectares or more so that they can live on agriculture; However, having 10 hectares means a considerable level of investment that few producers can have; The other option for it to be business is the productive investment towards vegetables. What has been found in the field is that the squash is one of the most useful generates; However, it is exposed to a high-risk market because of its seasonality and the supply that is in the market, so how can be a big business can also be a big failure. " The basic crops that everyone sows like maize, sorghum and wheat are not exactly the most profitable ones, but they are the ones that are easier to market and more secure in the market.

c) Representatives of the livestock association and the irrigation module

According to the representative of the irrigation module, "one of the biggest problems presented by agriculture is that there is not enough water. In Salvatierra there are difficulties due to the types of crops that exist, here corn, beans, chickpeas, sweet potatoes, chile, tomatoes, a variety of products are produced; What this means, which brings a very strong problem because to be able to provide a service of irrigation to the different producers is difficult because the times and the needs of irrigation are different, then the problem is directed to the diversity of crops and times that Are required to be able to use the irrigation water for the specific crop ". And in livestock there is a lack of interest, especially in young people. In order to be a business, agriculture and livestock would have to have all the equipment so that they can be profitable, but it is denying to the producer the constant increase of the inputs.

For the representative of the livestock association, "Salvatierra requires marketing policies, agricultural producers know how to produce and are specialists in producing grains and vegetables, but marketing has been the bottleneck that has never been overcome. It is necessary that there is a different marketing policy, that there are prices that guarantee that you will have certainty when selling the crop, with the purchase of hedges to futures you can buy the hedges and thus sell at a specific time and Grain prices are guaranteed, is what is required and that the government offers a technical orientation for approaching companies that are offering coverage to be able to be certain, denominating it as contract farming. "

Climate change is a problem that has been generated over many years, "specifically in Salvatierra, it has been seen that there have been weather events such as frost on different dates; Rain or high temperatures when not applicable. At present there have been important changes that affect the programming of the cycles because it is not known if there will be atypical frosts, if there will be rains out of season, if there will be winds or some other climatic phenomena that are not known, There are changes in the climate characteristics of the environment.

d) Representatives of political parties

In this case, representatives of the National Action Party (PAN) and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) of the municipality of Salvatierra were interviewed.

For the representative of the PAN "the biggest problem that agriculture presents is the water supply and the lack of organization of the producers. The levels of production are optimal at the municipal level but the population is not organized; To look for new systems of sowing, but mainly it is the cultural question, because they always sow the same thing for the family sustenance; The main problems for livestock is that people have already lost interest, in addition, agricultural inputs and livestock are expensive; The lack of water has affected because it no longer rains as before. "

For his part, the PRI representative pointed out that "the main problem presented by the agriculture of Salvatierra is the lack of interest in the agricultural sector by the peasants. The farmer has lost interest, no longer wants to invest because it is not profitable: it is not possible that there is a lot of budget for the agricultural sector which never reaches the municipalities, they take the farmers as ignorant. With regard to climate change, "there is an attempt to raise awareness among producers to improve their production and irrigation systems, not to use chemicals."

According to the representative of the PRI, "the strongest crisis in agricultural production is the low prices in agriculture and livestock." He points out that "the policies that should have the municipality should be to promote peasant organization, the peasants should organize to promote their demands, marketing strategies, the municipality is greatly promoting the organization because Salvatierra is imminently agricultural, it should Work together and have a vision of the future in agricultural production. " He mentions that "agriculture in Salvatierra is not business because the inputs are expensive, but it would be business if the production systems were improved and the new technologies were known"; On the other hand, "to livestock only people visualize it as a saving, not as a business".

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the agricultural producers interviewed said they planted 70% of the time and 30% of irrigation, but the interest in agriculture has been lost: the only ones who are interested are the elderly; The price of cattle is very cheap, there is a lot of Creole cattle that are difficult to raise, which is why they loose it in the hills and grow alone, they only make sure to catch rainwater during the dry season.

In agricultural production there are factors that limit productivity, some related to the inadequate management of agrochemicals, inputs and the lack of adoption of technological innovations. Farmers do not want to invest for fear of not making a profit; In addition, of not having the necessary technical assistance which causes disinformation on the management of agricultural crops. Another series of problems that afflict them are the marginal use of certified seed of improved varieties of temporary and irrigation, inadequate seed density, irrational use of irrigation water, ie, surface irrigation or irrigation - it is the method that most Used by the agricultural producers interviewed - is the irrational system in which there is the greatest waste of water.

Another factor that farmers do not count on is technical advice for the control of major pests and weeds. During the interviews farmers and ranchers said that "the biggest problem they have is the low profitability in production as a result of high input costs" (seeds, machinery, fertilizers, cost of irrigation, etc.) Problems with marketing in any of the crops they produce, most sell their produce to intermediaries; 100% of the producers interviewed commented that "coyotaje" is the biggest problem they face.

With respect to the cattle industry commented that only they practice it by habit or because it has nothing else to do, very few have cattle. In fact in the communities with greater population has lost the interest for the cattle ranch, only calves of fattening, pigs, goats and lambs are raised. On the other hand, this investigation allowed to identify that many times the representatives of the communities take advantage of the position and that only seek the self interest to the detriment of its represented.

The representatives of the political parties, the researchers from the University of Guanajuato, the representative of the irrigation module and the representative of the cattle association interviewed

agreed that the agricultural producer knows how to produce the land and that the cattle producer knows how to raise and fatten cattle ; However, do not know how to market their products; Said that Salvatierra has a future in agriculture and livestock, only need to organize, require more support to the authorities to reduce the costs of inputs, fixed prices in the sale of the product and technical advice from agronomists and veterinarians who know about these activities.

Agricultural production in Salvatierra has not had the political importance it should have, since it has not been realized that more and more basic foodstuffs are becoming more expensive, and producers have lost interest in agriculture and even more in agriculture. cattle raising. In the communities where the research was carried out, it was possible to observe that agricultural and livestock activities as forms of peasant life have been losing interest in the population, especially among the young. At present, the inhabitants of the communities live on the remittances sent by their migrant relatives from the United States and from the economic supports provided by the federal government through social programs such as Prospera and 70 years and more.

Among other things, a set of measures is required to correct the agricultural problem of Salvatierra: it is necessary that the farmers organize themselves; Require SAGARPA and the Agricultural and Rural Development Secretariat of Guanajuato to provide the technical advice of agricultural engineers, zootechnicians or veterinarians to increase agricultural production; Training in the use of certified seeds for irrigation or temporary; Advice for the production and use of organic fertilizers; Advice on the rational use of water; Courses to prevent pests, weeds and diseases; Developing a culture of consuming what is produced locally; Marketing advice; In addition, courses and workshops are needed where men, women and young people are affected by the strategic importance of agricultural production.

In addition, in Salvatierra has stopped producing traditional seeds or "criollas" due to the climatic changes; The traditional seed is each more vulnerable to the climatic disturbances that are experiencing the ecosystems, which causes droughts and abrupt storms, it is for that reason that the native seeds are being replaced by the improved seeds that increase the production, in addition to withstanding intense storms , plagues and diseases; However, improved seeds have become a monopoly. It is for this reason that small producers are more difficult to produce, because for them the inputs are more expensive and if the government provides the support, it does so only with the large agricultural producers, a situation that excludes and disadvantages the

small Producers. The municipality of Salvatierra has been governed by a diversity of political parties. And their rural communities still carry social problems such as migration, poverty, aging, demographic feminization, abandonment of agricultural activity and lack of interest on the part of the new generations in agricultural activities.

On the other hand, it is recognized based on the theory of the social actor that according to experiences, knowledge, political influence and power relations, individuals and social groups, interact, negotiate and reconstruct one or several versions of the Definition of "problems of profitability, commercialization or organization of the agricultural sector" or "loss of interest in the way of life of peasants by young people", ie that in this research, social actors interviewed as producers Agricultural producers, livestock producers, academics, representatives of political parties, livestock organizations or irrigation module, parade at the carnival of recognition, definition, denial or concealment of the crisis and agricultural problems of Salvatierra.

This study is a representative sample of 10 rural communities from a total of 82 communities that make up the municipality of Salvatierra. It is desirable that in the future the same interview be made with the other communities and the range of perceptions be extended to other social actors fundamental to understand the dynamics between the social actors involved in the rural development processes and their agricultural problems based on Norman Long's social actor theory. Likewise, it is suggested that the perspective of the sociology of the environment be incorporated to analyze the environmental deterioration caused by the model of agricultural modernization still in force in this municipality of southern Guanajuato, as well as the different reactions of governmental and Rural communities.

It should be noted that in most of the speeches of the interviewees of this study they focused on the "agricultural modernization approach" as a technological solution to agricultural and rural problems, for example, emphasizing the virtues of the green revolution: assistance Improved seeds, agrochemicals and market integration. This model has been implemented by the capitalist farmers of developed countries, ie farmers integrated into the market and using modern production methods. These agricultural technologies from advanced countries have spread among the traditional producers of backward countries through research centers and extension systems. In this sense, Mexico, Guanajuato and the municipality of Salvatierra, as well as their development plans, are not alien to a paradigm that favors the modernization of a competitive,

profitable and agro-exporting agricultural sector, but which at the same time entails high costs of exclusion Social, environmental deterioration and loss of peasant identity.

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